



The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

Public Service Reform Committee

Ivan McKee MSP
Cabinet Secretary for Public Service Reform
Scottish Government

By email

24 September 2026

Dear Ivan,

Delivering public service reform

Thank you for attending the Committee's meeting on [10 September 2026](#) to give evidence on the Scottish Government's approach to delivering public service reform.

You stated that the First Minister has described public service reform as the Government's defining ambition for this Parliament. Given the importance, scale and complexity of this work, the Committee has a key role in scrutinising the Government's approach and holding it to account for its policy choices and delivery.

The evidence session highlighted several areas where the Committee requires further information to scrutinise the Government's approach to public service reform. The Committee asks that you provide the information set out below in full.

Please provide the modelling, calculations and assumptions behind the targets to reduce the workforce by 0.5% over the next three years and to realise £1.5 billion for reinvestment in public services. In particular:

- the baseline workforce figure used;
- the Scottish Government's definition of "non-frontline workforce";
- the expected annual profile of reductions;
- the calculation linking the workforce reduction to the £1.5 billion figure; and
- an explanation of how the stated reduction of approximately 4% a year over five years within back-office staff relates to the overall 0.5% workforce reduction target over three years.

Given your evidence that the 4% reduction would not apply to the local government workforce, please confirm details of the consultation approach with local government around headcount and any expectations within that area.

It would also be useful to be provided with the modelling and supporting analysis for the Programme for Government announcement to transform 14 health boards into "two strategic boards on the mainland" as soon as it is available. This should include:

- the assumptions being tested;
- anticipated timescales;
- expected efficiencies;
- projected savings;
- implementation costs; and
- expected impacts on service delivery, staffing and governance and any risks.

If the modelling is not yet complete, please confirm when it will be provided to the Committee.

Further to this, please confirm whether the 3% savings target set out in the Fiscal Sustainability Delivery Plan is included in, separate from, or additional to the savings anticipated from the reduction in health boards. Please also explain how those savings have been calculated, apportioned and checked to avoid double counting.

The Committee also requires baseline information for public service reform proposals across ministerial portfolios in order to track delivery and assess whether expected benefits are being realised.

Therefore, we would request, for each significant public service reform proposal within all ministerial portfolios, the baseline modelling used to support the proposal. This should include, but not be limited to, reforms such as the amalgamation of environment bodies. For each proposal, please provide:

- detail of discussions and consultations with affected public bodies;
- the current baseline position;
- expected timescales;
- anticipated efficiencies;
- projected savings;
- implementation costs;
- workforce implications, associated delivery risks and performance measures.

Where information is not yet available, please state what is outstanding and when it will be provided.

You gave a commitment to provide the timeframe for publication of the expanded clusters programme network.

In addition, the Committee would find it helpful to see the Government's modelling, assumptions and projections underpinning the transformation of digital resources across public service bodies. This should include expected costs, projected savings, delivery milestones, dependencies, risks and the basis on which anticipated efficiencies have been calculated.

We look forward to working constructively with you and your colleagues on public service reform. The Committee is united in its aim to act as a critical friend by challenging the Scottish Government where necessary and supporting the delivery of first-rate public services for the people of Scotland to improve their outcomes in a fiscally sustainable way.

The Committee would welcome a response addressing each of the information requests set out in this letter as soon as possible, so that it can inform its future

evidence sessions and work planning.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Bob Doris".

Bob Doris MSP
Convener